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## Maximizing the Student Teaching Experience: Cooperating Teachers Share Strategies for Success

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## **Maximizing the Student Teaching Experience: Cooperating Teachers Share Strategies for Success**

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### Abstract

This article critically examines the results of a survey completed by fifty-seven cooperating teachers from nine different school districts in the greater Philadelphia area. All of the cooperating teachers had welcomed elementary education student teachers into their classrooms. Strategies used to help alleviate student teachers' fears and concerns related to their student teaching experience are shared and explored. Findings suggest that teachers use a multitude of strategies to calm their student teachers and set them up for a successful student teaching semester. Cooperating teachers detailed the tasks needed to be accomplished BEFORE the beginning of the student teaching semester to ensure a smooth and successful experience. Detailed information stating when and how student teachers should assimilate into the classroom are provided, plus strategies such as observing, modeling, and journaling are noted as significant ways cooperating teachers can assist pre-service educators. Overall, this collection of strategies was compiled so all involved in the student teaching relationship (the students, student teacher, and cooperating teacher) experience a fulfilling and meaningful experience in the classroom. Implications for change and future research are provided.

### Introduction

As a relatively new assistant professor at a four-year state university in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I have been given a wonderful opportunity to supervise elementary education student teachers. This is something I have wanted to do since I was a college student. After supervising fifty-five student teachers over a span of two years I have come to the realization that a large percentage of them were extremely fearful of starting this first "real" teaching assignment called student teaching.

From informally conversing with my students I quickly noticed that this sixteen-week, full-semester teaching assignment, which takes place in local elementary schools, is a cause for great concern and stress for many student teachers. Much research documents this phenomenon and reports on how this 'culminating semester' is frequently viewed as the most important experience in the professional preparation of teachers (Conant, 1963; Johnson, 1982; Holmes Group, 1986) and the most stressful semester of their college career (Clement, 1999; Enz, 1997; Schwebel et al., 1992). Many students have shared personal stories of not being able to sleep for weeks before they begin their

placement, eating antacids for breakfast, stressing about their relationship with their soon-to-be cooperating teacher, having panic attacks over which grade they will be assigned, and worse, having nightmares that the students will not listen to them or respect them as their teacher.

While I always have believe moderate stress helps students prepare for the unique challenges of the student teaching semester, excessive stress can inhibit both teaching and learning and, if left untreated, may eventually lead to physical problems (Justice, 1998; Swick, 1989). Listening to these stories prompted me to take action and was the basis for this study. Much research on student teaching has focused on the perspectives of the student teachers as opposed to those of the cooperating teachers (Rikard and Veal, 1996). This particular study focuses on what specific strategies cooperating teachers use to assist their student teachers during this critical time of their apprenticeship in an attempt to help alleviate their fears and anxieties. In this regard, it is my perception that the student teachers main focus should be on their students and their teaching, not on stressing about mismatched teacher personalities, student discipline, or assigned grade levels. It is my intent to use the information gleaned from this study to assist student teachers for their teaching experiences and help alleviate their concerns, while simultaneously providing comfort and support. More specifically, this research uncovers the strategies used to ensure the students, student teacher, and the cooperating teacher all have a successful semester teaching and learning in the classroom.

### Idea Construction and Rationale

The purpose of this research is twofold. One, to better understand cooperating teachers' views of student teachers and learn about the deliberate ways they offer help and assistance to student teachers during their culminating student teaching experience. Two, to share this information with future student teachers in an attempt to offer comfort and support, as well as with cooperating teachers who are mentoring student teachers, some possibly for the first time.

Student teachers will benefit from the perspectives of cooperating teachers as they share strategies of what works well in the classroom. It is my intent to use this critical information during weekly student teaching seminar meetings to help lesson students' anxieties and fears of the "real classroom." Additionally, this research will be helpful when collaborating with new cooperating teachers who have decided to mentor a student teacher for the first time. Learning strategies and helpful tips for a smooth semester from veteran cooperating teachers will certainly be an advantage for novice cooperating teachers. In this regard, I view this research as beneficial to all parties involved.

### Participants

Over four semesters (fall 2001, through spring 2003), sixty cooperating teachers from nine school districts in the Philadelphia metropolitan area were surveyed. From the sixty teachers asked to participate in the study, fifty-seven completed the survey questions, for a return rate of ninety-five percent. School districts were located in both

suburban and urban type locations and grade levels of the cooperating teachers ranged from kindergarten to eighth grade. The exact number of returned surveys broken down by grade level is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Number of Returned Surveys</u>
Kindergarten	3
First Grade	8
Second Grade	11
Third Grade	10
Fourth Grade	11
Fifth Grade	11
Sixth Grade*	2
Seventh Grade	0
<u>Eighth Grade</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	57

\* It must be noted that from the two surveys submitted from sixth grade cooperating teachers one sixth grade is part of a middle school and one, from another district, is part of an elementary school.

Student teachers were assigned to these cooperating teachers for either the entire student teaching semester, consisting of a sixteen-week placement, or a half-semester experience consisting of an eight-week placement. Overall, students do not have a choice as to the type of experiences they will receive, either a one sixteen-week experience or two eight-week experiences. These decisions are made between the local school districts and the Field Placement Office at the university.

Cooperating teachers had a range of experience working with student teachers. Most had mentored between seven and fifteen student teachers in past semesters from many of the colleges and universities in the immediate Philadelphia area. From the fifty-seven surveyed only one was new to the role of the cooperating teacher.

### Data Collection

The chosen method of data collection was a two-page survey, which asked open-ended questions and gave ample room for teachers to explain their answers. Cooperating teachers were asked questions related to what personal and professional traits they look for in a student teacher, and, in general, what areas are student teachers in need of more preparation. In regard to the topic of classroom management, questions pertaining to how the university can help prepare student teachers to have stronger classroom control were asked. Additionally, questions centering on cooperating teachers perceptions of the fears and anxieties student teachers have were explored, and lastly, how cooperating

teachers can help student teachers alleviate these concerns were shared. Although much information was gleaned from these informal surveys, this article concentrates on the strategies used by cooperating teachers to mentor their student teachers and provide for a successful student teaching experience.

### Data Analysis

Throughout the four semesters of data collection I printed the surveys and either mailed them through the U.S. mail system, complete with a self-addressed stamped envelope, or gave them to my student teachers at our weekly seminar class and asked them to hand deliver them to their cooperating teachers. A cover sheet/ thank you letter was attached to the survey explaining the rationale for the study.

The analysis of the data did not occur in a linear manner, but rather recursively. As surveys were collected they were continually reviewed, organized, and categorized. This was accomplished so the data could be recorded efficiently and managed in ways that allowed for easy retrieval.

The initial step in qualitative analysis is reading the documents that are to be analyzed. (Dey, 1993). I found that reading and reread the surveys in an attempt to become familiar with the data helped me to uncover themes and patterns within the open-ended responses. During this reading time I wrote notes I call “analytic memos” in order to develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships. Referred to as “an essential technique for qualitative analysis” these memos not only assisted in my reflection of the data collection, but captured my analytical thinking about the data by facilitating such thinking and stimulating analytical insights (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 78). Overall, data were collected, analyzed and coded according to salient themes that arose through the surveyed information.

### Results

A great number of teacher statements are included within the results and discussion section to let their voices be heard. Only using a minimal amount of teacher excerpts would have been easier, and perhaps would have yielded a tighter, more concise article. Yet, since one of my primary purposes of this project is to share this data with future student teachers and new cooperating teachers, I feel including a multitude of direct statements from veteran cooperating teachers proves to be more powerful.

#### **In the Beginning...**

The first, and one of the strongest themes to emerge from the cooperating teachers’ responses, focuses on having the student teacher and cooperating teacher meet each other BEFORE the start of the student teaching semester. Teachers gave multiple reasons why they believe this is a crucial step to starting a successful student teaching experience.

### Meet BEFORE the Experience Begins

Some teachers believe meeting before the experience helps calm nerves and alleviate fears. “It is imperative that the college students meet face to face with the cooperating teacher ahead of time. That will help to alleviate fears.” Some cooperating teachers suggest using this time to discuss the schedule, curriculum, and individual needs and personalities of the students. “It would be great if the cooperating teacher and student could meet before the student teaching assignment starts so the cooperating teacher could give the student teacher information on the schedule, curriculum details, and the make up of groups of students (e.g. some special education students, honors students, etc).” “Make student teachers aware of specific student needs so they can research before coming to class.” “Co-ops can explain what works with the class re: learning styles, discipline, expectations, previously taught concepts, health concerns, parent involvement, etc.”

### Discuss Expectations

Cooperating teachers believe setting firm and understandable expectations helps ensure a positive and successful student teaching experience. “Be up front about your expectations for the partnership you are about to undertake.” “The student teacher should meet with their cooperating teacher prior to their experience. This would give expectations to both the student teacher and cooperating teacher.” “Meet with students to discuss classroom expectations and make them clear early on.” “As cooperating teachers we need to let student teachers know what the school rules are, what we expect, what the university supervisor expects, what the kids expect, and what your student teacher expects. It’s all about clear expectations.”

### Observing

Cooperating teachers not only explained why soon-to-be student teachers should meet with their new cooperating teacher; they explained that observing the cooperating teacher before the experience begins is also important. “Student teachers should observe cooperating teachers in the classroom before their last semester or before their student teaching semester begins. Later on this means – no surprises.”

### Preparing the Class & a Proper Introduction

Teachers also shared the importance of preparing the students for the student teacher and providing a proper introduction for the student teacher. “Prepare the students in your class before the student teacher arrives; let the class know they are coming.” Providing a proper introduction is also necessary. “Introduce him/her as a co-teacher, not a student teacher and treat them as such.” “Introduce your student teacher to the class as a “teacher” not a student teacher. Make sure they know she or he is a voice of authority and deserves respect.”

While some teacher education programs might not share placement information with student teachers until the experience is about to begin, the teachers surveyed explained that knowing ahead of time is critical to starting the experience off on the right foot. Much work can be accomplished before the semester starts, and all of the consulting with the cooperating teacher regarding expectations and “preparing” for the class is certainly time well spent.

Next, cooperating teachers explained that the key to a successful student teaching semester is a two way street.

### **Communicating: Keeping an Open Dialogue**

Cooperating teachers stressed the importance of an open, honest, and reciprocal relationship between the student teacher and co-op. “Cooperating teachers need to be available to listen to student teachers concerns.” “Keeping an open line of communication is important for both the co-op and the student teacher; it also helps the student in the long run.” “Keep an open door for questions and concerns.” This section explores the theme of a strong relationship centering on respect, honesty, and personal connection and compassion.

#### It’s Such a Lonely Word... HONESTY

A small, but powerful word emerged as critical to fostering a strong cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. “Cooperating teachers can help student teachers by encouraging them to be honest and open about their fears. If the student teacher expresses the areas where they see themselves as weak, it allows the cooperating teacher to address them more easily.” “Co-ops can assist student teachers by spending time each day talking openly and HONESTLY about their expectations and about how their work in the classroom is proceeding. Honest communication is essential” “Let them know how you honestly think they are doing, provide suggestions and praise lessons that went well. They crave honest and detailed information.”

Teachers talked about the importance of providing positive feedback. The power of praise is viewed to be both motivating and encouraging. “Be supportive of all their efforts and offer lots of praise initially.” “Talk to the student teacher and ask them about their concerns. Answer everything that can be answered and give ample praise when deserved.” “Provide suggestions, praise lessons that go well. Treat them like a professional.” “When the student teacher is teaching the coop should be listening and then give praise and advice.”

#### Ask Questions

Co-ops explained that student teachers need to be provided with the time and opportunity to ask questions. “Being a student teacher is a difficult job. They need to ask questions to clarify ideas and increase information.” “Cooperating teacher should provide them with all the expertise they can.” “It is hard to be a temporary teacher.

Student teachers often don't know how much or little to offer. Let them ask questions to help feel the way."

### Personal Connection and Compassion

Many suggestions focusing on the humanistic side of teaching emerged as significant. Co-ops feel that sharing their student teaching experiences will not only help foster a closer, more honest relationship, in the end it will increase student teachers self-esteem to know that all teachers struggle at some point in the beginning of their careers. Sharing personal stories boosts student teachers morale and may lead to a more trustworthy relationship with the cooperating teacher. "Be helpful, encouraging, and relate your own teaching experiences to the student teacher." "Co-ops should share areas where they feel (or once felt) weak. This could help the student teachers see that areas of weakness can be worked on and they can become more successful." "We need to remember and tell them (student teachers) that we've all been where they are. We are all human. We all make mistakes and we all learn from them." "Cooperating teachers need to remember when they were student teachers or beginning teachers. You must show compassion!"

Overall, keeping an open door by providing praise and honest feedback, answering questions, listening to concerns and sharing personal stories related to teaching will help create an open and trusting relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher. In this type of environment classroom student teachers will flourish.

### **Assimilation: When and How?**

To have a successful student teaching experience, and complete all the necessary requirements for student teaching, the student teacher needs to assume responsibility in the classroom; but when and how should this begin?

Cooperating teachers have very specific, and very different, views on how and when student teachers should get involved in the classroom. All agree that student teachers need to be active and get involved in the classroom and its operations, but they gave very different answers in regard to the pace of assimilation. Like the fairytale, The Tortoise and the Hare, some co-ops prefer that student teachers dive into the deep end while others believe wading in the baby pool is the best way to start the experience. This is viewed as a matter of personal preference, for both strategies have definite merits.

### Jumping in the Big Pool

Many co-ops believe student teachers should get directly involved with the students right at the beginning of the placement. "Involve student teachers from the first week with direct student contact rather than provide a week of observation. Let them get right in there." "Get the student teacher involved ASAP, even if it is just a name game or something small, perhaps even one-on-one instruction." Letting students get directly involved can help with student confidence, feelings of belonging, and possibly give them an edge learning how to manage students. "Allow student teachers to jump into fairly



safe classroom management situations fairly quickly. This will help with the confidence factor.” Still, other co-ops shared ideas of involving students right away, but in a less intimidating and softer way in order to ease them into the (possibly already established) classroom. “Start student teachers working with one or two students the first day – have them walk around the room giving help, mark papers, work with 3-4 kids, and increase the number of child by the end of the first week.”

### Wading in the Baby Pool

Some cooperating teachers shared that they prefer to let their student teacher assimilate into the classroom at a slower pace while they concentrate on observing to get a feel for the students, the curriculum, the cooperating teacher’s style, and the climate of the classroom. Providing the opportunity to let student teachers feel comfortable before actively engaging in teaching is a strategy some favor. “Let the student observe for a while until he/she feels comfortable with the class.” “Student teachers need to be gradually incorporated into the daily routine of teaching.”

Although some co-ops suggest a slower approach to teaching and believe taking the necessary time to observe is critical; student teachers need to do so actively. Their observational skills should be finely tuned and they should use this time to become familiar with the rules, procedures, and students of the class. “During the observation period at the beginning of the placement, it is essential that the student teachers take good notes on classroom procedures, so that when they take over, it is a smooth transition.” “Observation days at the beginning of student teaching should not mean just sitting. By assisting students 1:1 the students and the student teacher get to know each other better and anxiety is reduced.” “Let student teachers take small steps, then a little more, etc. Small responsibilities, like working with individual students first, work well.” “Give lots of opportunities to work in small groups at first.” “Have them in front of the class for short periods of time in the beginning and gradually increase it.” “Start student teachers out with situations in which they are sure to be successful – short simple teaching assignments, or co-teaching during a lesson.”

Lastly, some teachers believe in letting the student teacher decide the pace of assimilation. “It is a personal decision. Let students evolve into the classroom at their own pace.” The benefit of this strategy views the student teacher as an individual and looks at their personal level of confidence and unique personality. It maintains that there is not one correct way to let students begin interacting in the classroom, but suggests an individualized approach.

Although co-ops differed on the best pace of assimilating student teachers into the classroom, a large number believe that to learn the craft correctly, student teachers must be exposed to many types of learn experiences. These experiences open the door for pre-service educators and create real life learning opportunities.

### Co-op as Opportunity Creator

Many cooperating teachers agree that student teachers need multiple and varied experiences during their placement, and these should occur both inside and outside the classroom. “Have as many experiences as possible during the placement such as conferences, faculty meetings, open house, back to school night, family fun nights, shows, presentations, intramural sports, etc.” “I try to include them in as many special activities as possible like plays, skits, parties and conferences to name a few.” “Have lots of opportunities for them to interact with students.” “Have them take part in as many teacher activities as possible.” “By having student teachers experience the multiple roles and multiple hats that teachers wear they will begin to realize the all encompassing job of teaching.” No longer can a teacher solely concentrate on just the lessons in the classroom. Communicating with other professionals in the same grade, in the building, or in the district, plus working with parents and other caregivers is critical for success in the classroom.

### Modeling

Cooperating teachers feel very strongly about the strategy of modeling and believe there is merit in having student teachers model veteran teachers. In teaching strategies related to classroom management and discipline, this was a popular response. “It is imperative that cooperating teachers model classroom management techniques so student teachers know how to use them effectively.” “Model clear and consistent enforcement of rules. Intervene in order to make the atmosphere more comfortable for both the student teacher and the students at the beginning of the experience.” Additionally, cooperating teachers discussed how they are role models for their student teachers and need to model expected teacher behavior and proper choices at all times. “Co-ops should model expected teacher behavior – their eyes and ears are always on US.” “Cooperating teachers need to remember – these are “student” teachers, they are beginning - they need to see us as role models and they need constant feedback, encouragement and guidance.”

In order to help student teachers lessen their fears and concerns regarding the student teaching experience, cooperating teachers feel that they should help them with their assimilation into the classroom, provide as many varied teaching/learning opportunities as possible, and be a strong role model for pre-service educators. Fulfilling all of these roles is a tall order, but is crucial to the success of the student teacher.

### **A Good Cooperating Teacher Always...**

Cooperating teachers listed many small ways they help prepare pre-service educators and relieve their anxiety. Strategies such as “letting student teachers know the key to this profession is flexibility” and “letting them know that co-ops aren’t perfect” were shared. Additionally, some other quotes were, “be willing to give up some control

of your classroom” and “...treat your student teacher as a professional. When they come up with a good idea, use it!”

Co-ops suggested that to help build student teachers self-esteem and creativity they should “let student teachers create lessons on their own” and “explain that each teacher teaches differently and has a different style.” In regard to style, many cooperating teachers made suggestions to “provide a stress-free, laid back environment allowing student teachers freedom to explore their style” and to “let student teachers develop their own style.”

Other comments focused on the physical space of the classroom and locating needed materials. “Set up a desk for them to use and include a name tag. Have a designated area for them to keep their lesson plans and materials.” “Helping them locate materials and resources for their lesson plans will help lessen anxiety.”

### The Two Sides of Observation

Co-ops gave multiple responses centering on the importance of observation from the perspective of both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. This strategy is one that many teachers commented on and believe is essential for a positive learning experience. “Cooperating teachers need to consistently observe and critique lessons constructively.” “By carefully observing my student teachers’ lessons, I’ve been able to provide assistance from the very beginning. That way, bad habits don’t form and are nipped in the bud.”

Cooperating teachers made comments suggesting that observational feedback must be timely and explicit. “Co-ops should address the lessons student teachers teach and why it worked or didn’t work for them. Remembering to be honest yourself can help the student teacher see that it takes time and practice for it all to work effectively.” One cooperating teacher explained the format she uses to provide feedback, “I point out what was good in every lesson they do first, then I give only ONE suggestion. I would have \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.” This structured format for feedback provides student teachers with encouragement by highlighting the positives, while also gently suggesting reasons that changes should be made. By keeping the suggestions for change to one per lesson student teachers will not be bombarded with negative feedback; hence, this strategy helps to preserve and build student teachers self-esteem.

Many surveyed teachers feel that student teachers need to take time to actively observe in the classroom before they begin teaching lessons. In an effort to build a strong relationship and introduce the student teacher to the unique world of the classroom, observation time is viewed as critical learning time. “Students should be allowed at least one or two full weeks to observe, ask questions, and confer with their cooperating teacher. Many things can be learned from actively observing the teacher and the students.” “Allow the student teacher to “kid watch” or observe as much as possible before teaching. So much can be learned through observation.” “Even if it’s a second placement student teachers need to observe. Sometimes there is too much of a push for them to begin teaching.” Observing other professionals in the building is also a strategy

that is believed to have merit. “Observing other faculty members helps student teachers to see different classroom management styles.”

Observation is viewed as a strategy that should be used by both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. The cooperating teacher should use it to provide explicit feedback from the beginning of the student teaching experience. The student teacher should use it to assist with their assimilate into their new learning environment and learn valuable information centering on their new students and the cooperating teachers’ unique teaching style.

### Journaling

Journaling was another strategy that multiple teachers listed as a way to maximize the student teachers learning experience. Frequently used as a vehicle for two-way communication between the cooperating teacher and student teacher, this method of feedback works well, especially when time is an issue. If a cooperating teacher is observing a student teacher teaching a lesson, when the lesson is finished the cooperating teacher might take over and begin teaching the next lesson of the day. When this happens no time is available for meaningful discussion or reflection. Since the pace of the typical elementary school day is so harried finding time to debrief, even at the end of the day, is sometimes very difficult or down right impossible. By passing back and forth a journal of thoughts, ideas, suggestions and questions, cooperating teachers and student teachers can participate in a thoughtful and meaning dialogue that is not dependent on the issue of time.

Cooperating teachers had this to say about the strategy of journaling: “Journaling consistently and honestly has been a plus between my student teachers and me. It gives us a place to share our thoughts and feelings when the other one is teaching that we might not find time for otherwise.” “Keep an open dialogue through a journal or log.” “Journaling by the cooperating teacher with positive comments and reinforcements helps to establish a positive rapport early in the placement.” Overall, this form of communication seems a favorite for maintaining a meaningful exchange between the co-op and the student teacher.

### And in the End...

Perhaps the most important strategy shared throughout the data was remembering and frequently reminding student teachers what the main focus of teaching actually is: the STUDENTS.

With student teachers carrying so much stress and anxiety with so many pressures upon them during their final field placement it may be easy for them to lose track of the big picture. As student teachers worry about grade level placements, earning the respect of the cooperating teacher and class, curriculum issues, their final grade from their supervisor, plus, on a larger scale, their final grade point average, securing letters of recommendation, looming Praxis exams, completing lengthy teaching applications,

interviewing, and securing a teaching position post graduation, it is no wonder why this semester is deemed as the toughest of their college career.

Some co-ops offered advice on how to ground their student teacher by reminding them of what the central focus of this semester is all about. “I look at having a student teacher like a co-teacher. I try to establish a relaxed atmosphere. I chime in during their lessons and I feel free to invite them to chime in when I am teaching. We are teaching the children – IT’S ABOUT THEM. The students must get the best from the both of us.” “Cooperating teachers need to remind student teachers that teaching is about the STUDENTS.”

### Implications

Clement (1999) believes “learning to teach is a process, and student teaching is just one phase of the process.” Student teachers must juggle many different balls and learn to wear many different hats during this critical semester in their teacher preparation program. By helping them prepare for the semester and offering useful support and assistance the cooperating teacher can help to make this a valuable learning experience as they prepare them to be “instructional leaders” of their future classrooms.

Overall, this study was conducted to assist both student teaching supervisors and cooperating teachers. Student teaching supervisors are often times provided the dual challenge of helping to prepare student teachers for their field placement by teaching senior methods classes, and, during the final semester, journeying down the student teaching path with student teachers. By explaining to soon-to-be student teachers that mentoring teachers have multiple strategies to chose from in an effort to diminish their stress, this may hopefully let them concentrate on their students, as well as and their own learning.

The results of this study also have implications for soon-to-be cooperating teachers and possibly even veterans. By sharing ideas and strategies that are being utilized in the classroom this research may assist cooperating teachers by providing concrete ways to help their student teachers. A considerable amount of research findings indicate cooperating teachers to be an extremely important person during the student teaching experience (Booth, 1993; DelGesso & Smith, 1993; Karmos and Jacko, 1977; Manning, 1977; McNally, Cope, Inglis, & Stonach, 1994; Stark, 1994). Guerrieri (1976) suggests student teachers identify the cooperating teacher as the “most significant person” because they spend more time with the cooperating teacher than with any other college instructor. If a student teaching experience is one semester long, as is the one connected with the university in this study, then student teaching composes approximately 12% of the student teachers collegiate career (Guerrieri, 1976).

Realizing that cooperating teachers are extremely important figures in the educational process, they are in need of a forum to dispense thoughts and ideas relative to supporting student teachers. This forum could support the interchange of valuable knowledge and expertise they provide to their pre-service teachers to make their student

teaching experiences less stressful and more rewarding. Subsequent studies of cooperating teachers comforting strategies are needed to provide research-based data essential for the understanding of how teachers can support and assist student teachers. Future research centering on what specific fears and anxieties student teachers experience would be a complimentary focus of study as well.

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